

regard to many plants, especially *Bryophyllum*, *Cardamine pratensis*, *Drosera*, *Malaxis paludosa*, &c. A fine example of this is shown by a *Chelidonium majus* var. *laciniatum* reared by Bernardi in the Botanical Garden at Erfurt, from whose leaves floral bractlets arose, partly unifloral, partly multifloral, without any preceding leaves\*. Shoots may be allured by the gardener out of most leaves which do not wither too soon†. Finally, the little budlets in whose bosom the germ of the new plant is formed and developed, and which we call seeds, are a kind of shoots, which in most cases owe their origin to leaves (carpels), out of which they spring (on the margins, which unite to form the placenta), or more rarely, out of their whole inner surface.

[To be continued.]

#### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

*Glaucus; or the Wonders of the Shore.* By CHARLES KINGSLEY. Cambridge: M'Millan. 1855. 12mo.

THE relief of the hapless individuals who feel themselves compelled to pass a certain number of weeks every summer out of town, without knowing in the least what to do with their time when away from their accustomed haunts, is the object which Mr. Kingsley has proposed to himself in the publication of this little book, which in our opinion is one of the most charming amongst the many admirable popular works on Natural History that have appeared of late. It may be defined, and we trust that the Reverend author will not be offended at the expression, as a Sermon on the Advantages of the Study of Natural History, but written in such a style and adorned with such a variety of illustration, that we question whether the most unconcerned reader can peruse it without deriving both pleasure and profit from his labour.

At the outset, as was to be expected, our author expatiates upon the great superiority of the study of Natural History over all the other sources to which mankind generally resort for their amusement, and here we think he has been betrayed by his zeal into a slight indiscretion; not that he has placed his favourite studies upon too high a pedestal, but he has treated those from which he wishes to wean his readers with too little consideration. In Mr. Kingsley's

*Rumex Acetosella*, *Ajuga Genevensis*, *Jurinea Pollichii*, *Nasturtium sylvestre* et *pyrenaicum*. According to Wydler, they often appear in *Viola sylvatica*.

\* I may add to the examples I have given of shoot-formation taking place out of the leaves, one which I observed in June 1853, in *Levisticum officinale*. I found, in fact, in several species of this Umbellifer, one or more, frequently two, shoots in the points of division of the leaves, which after producing a few weak leaves bore a small umbel.

† Kirschleger (Flora, 1844, No. 2) notices a fine example of this in *Gloxinia speciosa*.

view, all the lighter amusements of life are frivolous and vexatious ; like the original Shepherd in "Pickwick," he regards them all as "vanities;" and although this may be true in the abstract, we question whether it would not have been a more successful way of carrying the war into the enemy's country, to have treated these little weaknesses with more tenderness, rather than to insinuate that when once a man has put his hand to the plough of science, it becomes in a manner his duty to eschew all his previous amusements.

To compensate for this somewhat disrespectful view of what, to many, constitute the chief business of life, Mr. Kingsley certainly lays before his readers in a most attractive form the gratifications to be derived even from a *dilettante* study of the great book of Nature. Scarcely a branch of Natural History but has some of its most pleasing features put forward in the pages of this charming little volume, and although many of these are conveyed in hints, they still produce a sufficiently distinct impression upon the mind to awaken a desire for further information on the mysteries concealed by the half-raised veil.

Few subjects could be better adapted for the author's purpose than that expressed in the title of his book,—The Wonders of the Shore. On the shores and beneath the waves of the ocean dwell myriads of creatures whose very existence is unknown to the great mass of the public, as indeed was that of many of them until very lately even to the scientific naturalist. The remarkable forms, the beautiful colours, and the singular histories of these creatures render them objects of the highest interest ; whilst the imperfect state of our knowledge of many of them, resulting from the difficulties presented to investigation by the very conditions of their existence, may raise hopes even in the beginner, that before he has long prosecuted his studies in marine Zoology, he may be rewarded, if not by the discovery of new species (which by the way Mr. Kingsley appears to think one of the most ecstatic occurrences of life), at least by the observation of some new facts, which, by supplying the deficiencies of our previous knowledge, may be of still greater scientific importance.

Of the scientific merits of 'Glaucus' we need say but little. The book, as we are told at its commencement, is an amplification of an article contributed by the author about a twelvemonth ago to the North British Review, on Mr. Gosse's recent contributions to British Marine Zoology. The strictly zoological portion of the book is consequently to a great extent composed of extracts from the works of that naturalist, a circumstance which gives rather a peculiar character to the book when regarded as an independent publication, although legitimate enough in the pages of a review. There is, however, an admirable and most amusing original account of the habits of the Spider Crab (*Maia Squinado*), and of the multitude of zoophytes which that crustacean usually carries about with him, and we regret that its length prevents our transferring it to our pages, as an illustration of our author's mode of dealing with such subjects. We must content ourselves with adding, that, for the assistance of those who may be induced by the perusal of his book to take up the study of marine

Zoology,—and we hope his disciples may be numerous,—Mr. Kingsley has given a description of the dredge and dredging, and of the mode of forming an aquarium, the former extracted from Mr. Gosse's 'Devonshire Coast.'

We regret, however, to see such a faulty list of works recommended to the beginner in Zoology as that with which Mr. Kingsley concludes. Several of our best English works, even on Marine Zoology, such as Forbes's British Starfishes, and the British Mollusca of Forbes and Hanley, are entirely omitted; and we are told that "for Ornithology, there is no book after all like dear old Bewick"!—a statement that will be rather surprising to the possessors of Yarrell's 'British Birds,' a work which is not even mentioned.

We are also sorry to see that Mr. Kingsley has fallen into the common cant of talking about "closet and book naturalists," "big-word mongers," "synonym makers," and the like. This practice, which has become almost universal amongst our popular writers, arises, as a general rule, from their knowing little or nothing of the real nature of the things which they take upon themselves to censure, and if they were called upon to lay down rules by which the evils they cry out about might have been avoided, we suspect they would find themselves somewhat at a loss. These writers either don't know, or won't say, that it is the abuse of these things that is injurious and absurd, and their readers are of course unable to make the distinction. For this very reason, however, these tirades do all the more harm, as they beget in the mind of the beginner a feeling of contempt for the only means by which he can be sure of obtaining information.

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## PROCEEDINGS OF LEARNED SOCIETIES.

### LINNEAN SOCIETY:—

May 1, 1855.—Thomas Bell, Esq., President, in the Chair:

Read a paper entitled, "Notes on the White Secretion of the *Flata limbata*, and on its relation to the Insect White Wax of China." By Dr. Charles Murchison, formerly of the Bengal Medical Service.

The author's observations were drawn from an insect which he had found in the month of April 1854, in the jungles in the neighbourhood of Rangoon, specimens of which were exhibited to the Society. This insect was observed adhering in clusters to the leaves and twigs of various species of plants in the jungles, imparting to them a beautiful snow-white appearance. On endeavouring to secure one of the leaves with the adhering insects, a number of perfect hemipterous insects furnished with four wings, and a little larger than a common house-fly, were observed to spring by sudden jerks in various directions, leaving the white matter still adhering to the leaf. On close inspection, this white matter was found to consist of a number of insect-cases, each furnished with six legs,